



Marinduque State University – Boac Campus
College of Arts and Social Sciences

BUSLO NG *Marinduque*



Issue No. 2

2024

GE Elect 2: Buslo ng Marinduque Kalutang exchange gender and society research
2016-23 BSSW research about gender and society through the lens of babaylan and harambee

Some of the topics from the said period depicts persona such as teenage mothers, suspected violators, women survivors and longing bekis along with issues like breaking gender barriers, gender sensitivity, acceptance, violence against women and BSSW male students.

Babaylan is the central figure during the most recent national celebration of women's month. They are the precolonial mystic and religious figure who intercedes between this world and beyond. Babaylans are healers and powerful individuals who have traditional knowledge about the environment and even the cosmos.

Harambee is the Swahili term for pulling out together especially in times of crisis. This is the operative term for the Social Work day coinciding with the month of March. It is similar and related to the Filipino word kapwa and bayanihan. Both are rooted in community and collective action for the cause or greater good and for the greater number. In celebration of World Social Work Month, the theme was very appropriate, "co-building hope and harmony: a harambee call to unite a divided society."

The process of review and blind refereeing with the initial completed research from 2016 to 2023, then making use of the Sustainable development goals (SDG) articles with several parts: abstract, background, highlight, impact, outcome, future plans, conclusion, call to action, gallery and reference. Then it was farmed out to the current program chair, former research professor and the gender & development focal person.

For Buslo vol. 2, gender and society is the general theme, based on the existing knowledge production from BS Social Work. It also featured the respective stakeholders like the GAD focal point system, Boac Women's Club, the KALIPI (Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina) and the Bila-bila LGBTQIA+ organization. It also incorporated the most recent Young Adult Fertility Survey (YAFS) data sets with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s apart from target no. 5 gender equality.

Dr. Randy T. Nobleza
Gender and Society
2nd semester 2026-27

BUSLO NG *Marinduque* Rationale

Buslo ng Marinduque (BNM) is not a particularly new or just a rehash of the interdisciplinary research journal of the School of Arts and Sciences. True to its vision of serving as a platform for BA Communication, BA English Language Studies and BS Social Work research. The namesake is a Filipino word for basket, symbolizing the aggregated and curated island knowledge and knowledge. Based on the initial proposal of Prof. Panchito Labay, the Tagalog acronym is “**Bunga ng mga Sinaliksik sa Loob ng Marinduque**” is tantamount to results of research in Marinduque.

In addition, BUSLO also stand for “**Building Understanding through Systematic Learning and Observation.**” This embodies the Marinduque State University (MarSU) journey to becoming a research university through the humble contribution from the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS). Guided by the core principles derived from the CASS research roadmap 2026-30 that can be summed up with **Island Innovation for Impact**. BNM endeavors to promote local studies and scholarship, provide a platform for inter, multi/ transdisciplinary dialogue, inform policy and institutionalize innovation, conserve culture and safeguard heritage of the island and collaborate with foreign/ external scholars.

The open access journal encompasses a wide array of topics within the CASS programs such as social sciences including but not limited to sociology, anthropology, political science and economics with a focus on community development, social issues and public policy in Marinduque. Moreover, BNM is also concerned with research on social welfare, community services and interventions aiming at improving the quality of life for Marinduque islanders.

In addition, there is a premium for arts and humanities by exploring Marinduque’s cultural heritage through literature, history, philosophy, visual and performing arts with cultural studies. Likewise, language and communication is a priority, studies on local languages, communication practices, media studies and the role of language in cultural identity and social interaction. At the end of the day, other fields of research including collaborative topics from education, allied medicine, business and entrepreneurship, public governance and political science, tourism, natural and physical sciences and technology incorporating island innovation for impact.

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BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING MALE STUDENTS TO PURSUE SOCIAL WORK ACADEMIC PATH IN MARINDUQUE STATE COLLEGE

ARRIANE JANE O. LIGUIT, MA. FE S. CANELAS, VEA B. MORONG

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the socio-economic, cultural, and personal determinants influencing male students to pursue the Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) program at Marinduque State College (MSC), within the broader context of gendered perceptions in higher education and the persistent underrepresentation of males in helping professions. Social work, traditionally associated with caregiving, empathy, and emotional labor, is often viewed as a female-dominated field, which contributes to societal stereotypes that influence career decision-making among students.

Anchored in a qualitative descriptive research design, the study explored the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges of six (6) purposively selected male participants. Data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings across responses.

Findings revealed that male students' decisions are influenced by socio-economic exposure, cultural expectations, and personal motivations. Despite these factors, gender stereotyping and adjustment difficulties remain present. The study emphasizes the need for inclusive policies, mentorship programs, and awareness campaigns to promote gender equality in social work education.

INTRODUCTION

The professional field of social work aims to enhance the well-being of individuals and families and entire communities through its commitment to social justice and empowerment and its provision of social services. The organization plays a vital role in tackling social problems which include poverty and social inequality and mental health issues.

The profession of social work holds significant value, yet people perceive it as a female-dominated field because they associate its work with caregiving and empathetic behavior and emotional support work. The cultural norms together with traditional gender expectations create barriers which prevent men from entering professions that involve helping others. The Bachelor of Science in Social Work program at Marinduque State College (MSC) demonstrates a gender imbalance because female students outnumber their male counterparts. The increasing presence of male students shows that students are beginning to shift their understanding of career possibilities and their perception of gender roles.

This study explores the various socio-economic and cultural and personal elements which lead male students to choose social work as their field of study while determining the obstacles they face in an academic space which female students predominantly occupy.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to determine the factors influencing male students to pursue social work at Marinduque State College (MSC). Specifically, it seeks to answer:

1.What is the profile of the participants in terms of:

Religious affiliation

Source of livelihood

2.What factors influence male students in terms of:

Socio-economic

Cultural

Personal

3.What challenges are encountered by male students?

4.What interventions may promote gender inclusivity in the program?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

- The researchers utilized qualitative descriptive research design which enables them to investigate all human experiences through this research method. The design enable researchers to investigate human experiences through their actual life experiences without any need for numerical data or variable control. The design enables researchers to gather complete and precise data through detailed yet significant student stories which show their reasons for choosing social work despite existing gender stereotypes.
- The study employs qualitative descriptive research because it provides a complete understanding of how social realities function through multiple social factors which include gender perceptions and career choices and academic adaptation in female-dominant settings.

Research Locale

- The research took place at Marinduque State College which is situated in Boac Marinduque Philippines. The research team chose MSC as their study site because it offers a Bachelor of Science in Social Work program which creates

an academic setting where male students can study although they are not commonly seen in this environment. The research team used this environment to study how participants experienced gender issues because it represented their actual educational setting.

Research Population And Sample

- The population of the study contained male students who were currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Social Work program at MSC. From this population, six (6) participants were selected using purposive sampling.
- The researchers used purposive sampling to select study participants who possessed the study's required specific characteristics. The program selection process required participants to show their year level and their socioeconomic status. The study achieved its goal of obtaining different perspectives which produced valuable qualitative data.
- The small sample size is appropriate for qualitative research since the goal is not generalization but in-depth understanding of lived experiences.

Research Instrument

- The primary instrument used in this study was a semistructured interview guide developed by the researchers. The instrument was designed to collect detailed qualitative data which matched the study's research goals.
- The Interview guide was divided into four major sections: participant profile, socio-economic factors, cultural and personal influences, and challenges experienced in the program. The section required participants to answer open-ended questions which asked them to share their personal experiences and views with the researchers.

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- The researchers used a semi-structured interview format which allowed them to use flexible questioning methods that enabled them to investigate further based on the answers given by their participants. The method allowed all crucial insights to be collected while ensuring that all interviews would proceed according to their established framework.
- The interview guide underwent a pre-collection assessment to determine its effectiveness in communicating research questions to study participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

- The data gathering process followed a systematic and ethical procedure to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. First, the researchers secured permission from the appropriate authorities of Marinduque State College before conducting the study. The research work followed institutional requirements because this research work conducted its activities.
- The researchers used sampling criteria to identify potential participants after they obtained approval. The researchers provided information about the study (purpose) study objectives and study scope. The researchers explained the voluntary nature of participation, ensuring that no pressure was applied. The researchers obtained informed consent from all study participants before conducting interviews.
- The researchers conducted individual interviews in a quiet space which provided comfortable conditions to help participants provide open and honest answers. The session used audio recordings which participants had authorized together with written field notes which documented essential findings from the session.

All recorded interviews were transcribed word-for-word to maintain precision following the completion of data collection. The research team created transcript documents which they prepared for analysis while they preserved data integrity through all research activities.

Data Analysis

- The researchers used thematic analysis to evaluate the data they had collected. The method enables researchersto discover and study and explain all patterns existing in qualitative data. The team started their work by reading the interview transcripts multiple times until they achieved full content understanding.
- The researchers found and marked essential statements which answered their research questions. The researchers assigned codes to the statements which they then sorted into different groups. The researchers developed main themes which included socio-economic factors and cultural influences and personal motivations and challenges from these groups.
- The analysis process required researchers to interpret their findings through response descriptions which enabled them to understand how male students developed their academic understanding and learning experiences.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Socio-economic Factors

The study results show that 83.3% of participants (5 out of 6) showed a response to social work practitioners while 66.7% of participants (4 out 6) showed a response to job opportunities and 50% of participants (3 out 6) showed a response to financial limitations which demonstrates that their decision to study social work results from their social economic background and their financial situation.

Cultural Factors

The participants declared that family expectations shaped their academic decisions according to 66.7% of the sample while 50% of the sample made academic decisions based on their professional status and 33.3% of the sample based their choices on established gender roles which shows that family remains the strongest cultural influence in their academic choice.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a semistructured interview guide developed by the researchers. The instrument was designed to collect detailed qualitative data which matched the study’s research goals.

Personal Factors

The participants who took part in the study demonstrated their personal reasons through their work experience before becoming social workers and 66.7% of participants joined social work because they wanted to assist people and 50% of participants entered the field because they wanted to study that particular area which indicates that they had strong internal motivation which guided their choices.

Challenges

The study shows that 83.3% of participants (5 out of 6) faced difficulties because they entered an environment where women held the majority while 66.7% of participants (4 out 6) faced gender-based stereotypes and 50% of participants (3 out 6) experienced social exclusion which shows that genderrelated obstacles continue to exist in the system.

CONCLUSION

- The social work degree decision by male students requires assessment of their economic background and cultural beliefs and their individual characteristics

- Financial aspects and their available job options and their educational experiences create the opportunities which determine their academic path
- Their decision-making process receives strong influence from both family expectations and societal standards
- Their dedication to work has two personal strengths which include their desire to assist others and their ability to adapt and their dedication to work
- The work environment presents two main challenges through gender-based stereotypes and the presence of female workers
- The academic experiences of male social work students face negative impacts from gender bias and social stigma
- The social work education system is becoming more inclusive but there are still obstacles that need to be addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

The study results lead to the following proposed actions

- The Bachelor of Science in Social Work program needs to establish policies which include all genders
- The social work profession needs to be recognized as a gender-neutral field which accepts all genders
- The social work department needs to develop stronger mentorship programs which specifically support male students
- The institution needs to establish ongoing guidance and counseling services which will assist students throughout their academic journey
- The program should provide equal opportunities for both male and female students to participate

- The classroom needs to establish an environment which includes all students while minimizing negative stereotypes
- Researchers need to conduct additional research studies which examine two subjects namely male involvement in social work and gender inclusion practices in academic settings
- The organization will create awareness campaigns which challenge traditional gender stereotypes that influence career choices



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LEVEL OF GENDER SENSITIVITY OF BSSW STUDENTS IN SELECTED SUCs IN REGION IV-B (MIMAROPA)

MORALES RONALYN, NABOS JHAY, MORENO ANDREA MAE, NERIAS NORIE ANN MAE, RETARDO MARK DAVE, RICAFRENT, KATE

ABSTRACT

Gender sensitivity is crucial in promoting equality and inclusivity, especially in professions like social work. This study assessed the level of gender sensitivity among Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students in four selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA): Marinduque State College (MSC), Western Philippines University (WPU), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), and Palawan State University (PSU). Using a descriptive research design, data were collected via an online survey questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings show that students generally demonstrate high gender sensitivity across three indicators: use of language, gender role attitudes, and participation. However, significant differences were observed among institutions, with PSU and OMSC scoring higher than MSC and WPU. The study underscores the importance of standardized gender-sensitive programs across higher education institutions to prepare socially responsible graduates. Keywords: gender sensitivity, SUC's, gender roles attitudes, use of language, participation social work.

INTRODUCTION

The study highlights the importance of gender sensitivity as a critical element in promoting equality and inclusivity, particularly in the field of social work. It is anchored on the global and national efforts to advance gender equality, such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

Memorandum Order No. 01, s. 2015, which mandates the integration of Gender and Development (GAD) principles in higher education curriculum. Despite these policies, there remains a need to assess how effectively gender sensitivity is being developed among Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students across State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B, namely Marinduque State College (MSC), Western Philippines University (WPU), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), and Palawan State University (PSU).

The study is primarily driven by the problem of inconsistent levels of gender sensitivity among institutions, as reflected in the significant differences in students' language use, gender role attitudes, and participation. Notably, Marinduque State College (MSC) recorded comparatively lower results across all indicators, suggesting gaps in the implementation and integration of gender-sensitive education and GAD-related initiatives. These variations indicate that while gender sensitivity is generally evident among social work students, its development is uneven and influenced by institutional practices and curriculum delivery.

In response to this issue, the purpose of the study is to examine and compare the level of gender sensitivity among BSSW students across selected SUCs and to identify areas that require improvement in gender-

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METHODOLOGY

responsive education. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for the development and implementation of a localized and standardized GAD curriculum framework that can be consistently applied across State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B. This proposed standardization aims to address the lower performance observed in Marinduque State College (MSC) and ensure that all institutions produce socially responsible, gender-sensitive, and inclusive future social workers.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students from four State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA), specifically Marinduque State College (MSC), Western Philippines University (WPU), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), and Palawan State University (PSU). The study utilized a total sample of BSSW students selected through stratified sampling to ensure equal representation from each institution.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument used in the study was an online survey questionnaire, which was designed to measure the level of gender sensitivity among BS Social Work students. The questionnaire was divided into indicators such as use of gender-fair language, gender role attitudes, and participation. Each item was rated using a Likert scale to determine the respondents' level of agreement.

In addition, supporting data were gathered from related literature, institutional reports, and Gender and Development (GAD) materials to strengthen the interpretation of results.

Data Gathering Process

The study employed a descriptive-comparative research design. The researchers first sought permission from the respective institutions and coordinators of the BSSW programs in the selected SUCs. After approval, the online survey questionnaire was distributed to the identified respondents.

Data collection was conducted within a specified period, ensuring that responses were gathered fairly and consistently across all participating institutions. After retrieval, the data were tallied, encoded, and analyzed using weighted mean to determine the level of gender sensitivity and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to identify significant differences among the four SUCs.

Finally, the results were interpreted based on statistical findings and were used to draw conclusions regarding the level and variation of gender sensitivity among BSSW students.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study showed that Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students from the selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) generally demonstrate a high level of gender sensitivity in terms of gender-fair language, gender role attitudes, and participation. This indicates that students are aware of gender equality and are able to apply inclusive behaviors in both academic and social settings.

However, differences were observed among institutions. Palawan State University (PSU) and Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) obtained higher mean scores compared to Marinduque State College (MSC) and Western Philippines University (WPU). The ANOVA results confirmed that these differences are statistically significant, suggesting that the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs varies across institutions. In particular, the consistently lower scores of Marinduque State College (MSC) indicate a need for stronger integration of gender-sensitive practices in its curriculum and activities. The overall weighted mean for use of language was 4.09, interpreted as "Agree," indicating that students generally practice gender-fair language. Among the institutions, Occidental Mindoro State College obtained the highest mean score of 4.21, reflecting stronger application of inclusive language. On the other hand, Marinduque State College recorded the lowest mean of 3.93, although still within the "Agree" level.

This suggests that while students are aware of gender-fair language, there are variations in how consistently it is practiced. The results imply a need for continuous reinforcement of inclusive communication across institutions.

The overall weighted mean for gender role attitudes was 4.14, interpreted as "Agree," indicating generally positive and egalitarian views among students. Palawan State University recorded the highest mean score of 4.32, suggesting stronger support for gender equality. In contrast, Marinduque State College had the lowest mean score of 3.84, though still within the "Agree" range. This shows that while students tend to reject traditional gender stereotypes, some variations still exist. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening educational efforts to further promote progressive gender perspectives.

Participation obtained the highest overall weighted mean of 4.29, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This indicates that students are actively involved in activities that promote gender sensitivity and inclusivity. Palawan State University had the highest score of 4.41, reflecting a high level of student engagement. Meanwhile, Marinduque State College had the lowest mean of 4.02, though still within the "Strongly Agree" level. The results suggest that students recognize the importance of participation in promoting gender equality. However, differences among institutions indicate varying levels of opportunities or encouragement for involvement.

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The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results showed significant differences among the SUCs across all indicators, with F-values greater than 2.88 at the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the variations in gender sensitivity among institutions are statistically significant and not due to chance. The findings suggest that institutional factors such as curriculum, programs, and implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives influence students' gender sensitivity. These differences highlight the need for a more standardized approach in promoting gender-sensitive education. Strengthening policies and practices across institutions may help reduce these disparities.

These findings are supported by the study of Lyka T. Manglal-lan (2024) on Egalitarian Gender Role Attitudes (EGRA), which is based on YAFS-related and national survey data. The study found that while gender-equal attitudes in the public sphere such as work and education have improved over time, traditional views in the private sphere, particularly within the home, still persist. This explains why, despite high overall gender sensitivity among students, variations still exist across institutions like Marinduque State College (MSC), where traditional beliefs may still influence attitudes.

According to Manglal-lan (2024), She revealed that females are more likely to support egalitarian gender roles compared to males, and that education and work exposure play a significant role in shaping gender-equal perspectives. This supports the present study's findings that higher-performing institutions such as Palawan

State University (PSU) and Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) may have more effective educational programs and learning environments that promote gender sensitivity. It also highlights the importance of strengthening institutional efforts, especially in Marinduque State College (MSC), to further improve students' awareness and attitudes.

To further support the quantitative findings, an interview was conducted with Mrs. Rosavilla L. Hizole, President of the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina (KALIPI)-Maybo. She emphasized that all individuals, regardless of gender including males, females, and LGBTQ+ members should be treated with respect to promote peace and social cohesion. This aligns with the study's findings that students generally exhibit positive gender role attitudes. She also highlighted the important role of women as strong, resilient, and capable individuals who contribute not only in the household but also in community development and leadership. This supports the study's high participation scores, indicating that students recognize the active role of women in society.

In addition, she noted that men also have their own organization called "KATROPA," which provides them with a space for support, involvement, and development. This reflects the idea that gender sensitivity is not only focused on women but also promotes inclusivity and participation for all genders. The presence of both KALIPI and KATROPA in the community highlights the importance of balanced and equal opportunities for men and women.

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Furthermore, she stressed that gender sensitivity should be mutual, where both men and women understand and respect each other. However, she acknowledged that women still experience unfair treatment in some cases, which reflects the findings of Manglal-lan (2024) that traditional gender norms still persist, especially in private seating.

She also emphasized that individuals should be respected regardless of their clothing and self-expression, as this is part of human rights and dignity. This supports the study's findings on gender-fair language and inclusive attitudes among students.

Overall, both the survey results and supporting literature indicate that gender sensitivity among BS Social Work students is generally high but not evenly distributed across institutions. The persistence of traditional gender norms, as highlighted in the literature, and the lower performance of Marinduque State College (MSC) suggest the need for stronger and more consistent implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs to promote equality and inclusivity in all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

Discussion

Gender sensitivity, defined as the awareness and understanding of gender differences and the promotion of fairness and inclusivity, is essential for social work professionals who are expected to uphold social justice and equal opportunities. The findings of this study, which revealed a generally high level of gender sensitivity among BSSW students in selected State

Universities and Colleges (SUCs), indicate that higher education institutions are making progress in developing gender-aware future practitioners. However, the observed differences among institutions particularly the lower performance of Marinduque State College (MSC)—suggest that efforts in promoting gender sensitivity are not yet uniform and still require strengthening.

These findings can be viewed in relation to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Sustainable Development Goal 3, Sustainable Development Goal 4, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Sustainable Development Goal 10, Sustainable Development Goal 16, and Sustainable Development Goal 17.

The high level of gender sensitivity among students contributes to **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)** by promoting positive mental and social environments where individuals feel respected and included. When students practice gender-fair attitudes and behaviors, it reduces discrimination and supports overall well-being.

In terms of **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, the results reflect the role of educational institutions in providing inclusive and equitable learning environments. However, the variation in scores among SUCs highlights the need for more consistent and strengthened Gender and Development (GAD) integration, especially in MSC, to ensure that all students receive the same quality of gender-sensitive education.

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The study directly supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which is the central focus of the research. The positive attitudes of students toward gender roles, participation, and inclusivity indicate progress in empowering all genders. At the same time, the differences across institutions and the persistence of some traditional beliefs show that achieving full gender equality remains a continuing process.

Furthermore, the findings relate to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as the study reveals disparities in gender sensitivity levels among institutions. Addressing these gaps is important in reducing inequalities within academic settings and ensuring equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender.

The study also aligns with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), as gender-sensitive education helps build inclusive and respectful environments. Promoting fairness and respect among students contributes to the development of institutions that uphold justice and equality.

Lastly, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is reflected through the collaboration among different SUCs and community organizations. In connection with this, groups such as KALIPI in Maybo, Boac play an important role in promoting gender awareness at the community level. Their programs, along with academic efforts, strengthen partnerships that support gender equality and social development.

Overall, the study shows that while BSSW students generally demonstrate gender sensitivity, there is still a need for stronger institutional efforts,

consistent program implementation, and active partnerships to fully achieve the goals of gender equality and inclusive development.

CONCLUSION

The Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) program shows that students from Region IV-B display high gender sensitivity. The study found that all institutions tested their students but Marinduque State College (MSC) showed lower results than all other institutions. The existing differences show that although organizations established policies Gender and Development (GAD) programs and curriculum delivery need better implementation management.

The development and implementation of a standardized localized GAD framework will create uniform standards that all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) must follow. The establishment of gender-sensitive educational programs will help social work students develop the necessary skills to achieve equality and inclusivity and social justice.

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Experiences, Common Problems and Strategies of Teenage Mothers in Barangay Yook Buenavista Marinduque: A Case Analysis

Mediana, D. R., Morales, Il. S., Pamfilo, M. I., Jandulong Me. L

ABSTRACT

This study is about exploring the experiences of teenage mothers in Barangay Yook, Buenavista Marinduque. The participants were ten identified teenage mothers who got pregnant, during their adolescent period, based on the data recorded at the Buenavista Municipal Health Office (MHO). A qualitative research and phenomenological approach were used in determining the experiences of the teenage mothers into different stages. The researchers have employed two sessions Focused Group Discussion as a research method (FGD Guide) and an open ended question were used to determine the live experiences of the teenage mothers, in different stages. Each session consists of five members who answered the same questions and follow-up interviews. As a result of the study, it was found out that most of the teenage mothers were in high school when they became pregnant and stopped with their studies to conceive the baby, Struggles came into their lives as teen couples especially in their relationships and in their families, peers, and community. Some changes happened with their physical, emotional and psychological aspects which developed maturity. They have learned to prioritize their children than pursuing education in high school but willing if opportunities get into them and to be able to find a better job and pursue their studies in college

Keywords: Teenage Mothers, Case Study

BACKGROUND

Teenage pregnancy is a growing concern in many communities in the Philippines. It is a common problem that is more likely to affect vulnerable populations due to factors including poverty, illiteracy, and a lack of job prospects. It continues to be a significant factor in infant mortality and maternal mortality, as well as intergenerational cycles of illness and poverty. Teenage pregnancy incidences were shown to be mostly caused by a lack of education, lack of access to contraception and health information, and autonomy in making decisions.

And according to WHO world health organization Adolescent pregnancy is a global phenomenon with clearly known causes and serious health, social and economic consequences. Globally, the adolescent birth rate (ABR) has decreased, but rates of change have been uneven across regions. There are also enormous variations in levels between and within countries. Adolescent pregnancy tends to be higher among those with less education or of low economic status. Further, there is slower progress in reducing adolescent first births amongst these and other vulnerable groups, leading to increasing inequity.

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Teenage motherhood matters in society because it doesn't just affect one person but it has wider effects on families, communities, and even the future of a country. One is education, why? Because there are many teenage mothers who stop or delay their schooling to take care of their child. This limits their chances of finishing school and achieving their goals, which can affect their future opportunities. Also it affects our economy. Without proper education, it becomes harder to find stable jobs. This can lead to financial struggles, not only for the teenage mother but also for her child, increasing the risk of poverty.

Health risks, Teenage pregnancy can lead to health complications for both the mother and the baby because their bodies may not yet be fully ready. This makes access to healthcare and support very important.

While in Barangay Yook, located in Buenavista, Marinduque, it is a rural community where families often rely on limited economic resources such as small-scale farming, fishing, and informal labor. Like many barangays in the Philippines, access to education, healthcare services, and reproductive health information remains a challenge, especially for adolescents. Social norms and close family ties strongly influence the behavior and decisions of young people in the community.

Within this setting, the issue of teenage pregnancy has become a growing concern.

Many young women in Barangay Yook experience early pregnancy during their high school years, which often leads to interrupted education and limited future opportunities. Factors such as lack of comprehensive sex education, peer influence, family dynamics, and economic difficulties contribute to this situation. Despite these challenges, the community also plays an important role in shaping the experiences of teenage mothers.

HIGHLIGHTS

Illiteracy- the inability to read, write, or comprehend simple written information, often limiting an individual's capacity to function in society.

Motherhood- the state of being a mother, encompassing the nurturing, care, and raising of children, often defined by unconditional love, profound responsibility, and personal sacrifice.

Teenage Mothers- females aged 10-19 who are pregnant or have given birth.

Poverty- a state of deprivation where individuals or families lack the financial resources and essential needs such as food, clean water, shelter, and clothing to maintain a basic standard of living.

WHO- The World Health Organization (WHO) is the specialized United Nations agency responsible for international public health

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IMPACT

Teenage motherhood has lasting effects on a young mother's life, particularly in terms of education, career opportunities, and financial stability. While it often presents significant challenges and risks of long-term hardship, it can also foster resilience, responsibility, and personal growth. With strong support systems from family, community, and institutions, teenage mothers can overcome these difficulties, continue their education, and build better futures for themselves and their children. Ultimately, the study highlights both the risks and the potential for positive outcomes when proper support and interventions are in place.

OUTCOMES

Most of the teenage mothers were in high school when they became pregnant and subsequently stopped their studies to conceive their babies. Teenage mothers experienced struggles in their relationships as teen couples, affecting their families, peers, and community. Participants underwent physical, emotional, and psychological changes that contributed to their maturity. Teenage mothers learned to prioritize their children over pursuing education in high school. Despite stopping their studies, teenage mothers are willing to pursue education in college and seek better job opportunities if the chance arises. This outcome reveals the complexities of teenage motherhood and emphasizes the need for support systems that allow young mothers to continue their education and improve their life opportunities.

FUTURE PLANS

Future Plan for Teenage Mothers in Barangay Yook, Buenavista, Marinduque

This plan contains three main components which reflect the experiences and problems and solutions which teenage mothers face in their daily life.

We should have to make some goals that include the short-term goals and the long-term goals. Therefore, here are some of the short-term goals of education and Skills Training for the teenage mothers. This program should establish pathways which enable individuals to pursue alternative educational options together with vocational training and essential life skills education. Another is the organization has to provide necessary reproductive health services together with mental health assistance and nutrition educational programs. Also the organization should deliver training programs for livelihood development together with microfinance solutions and employment matchmaking assistance.

While in long-term goals the program should assist teenage mothers to attain financial independence through its support system. We should also include the community engagement where the program has to create an environment which enables the community to support

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its members while fighting against discrimination and fostering acceptance. Another long term goal is the organization should pursue the establishment of full sex education programs together with initiatives which aim to reduce teenage pregnancy rates.

Here are some of the strategies to Implement this future goal. The first one is partnership, the organization will partner with governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations and local community groups to deliver essential resources and services. Another strategy is communitybased initiatives, the program will create community centers which will function as support networks for teenage mothers. Another strategy is the capacity building which the program should provide training for community workers and volunteers who will learn to deliver assistance and mentorship

CONCLUSION

Teenage pregnancy in Barangay Yook, Buenavista, Marinduque shows that many young mothers face serious challenges at an early age. Most of them became pregnant while still in high school, which led them to stop their studies. They experienced different struggles in their relationships, families, and community. They also went through physical, emotional, and psychological changes that helped them become more mature.

Despite these difficulties, teenage mothers learned to take responsibility and prioritize their children. Even if they had to pause their education, many of them still have the desire to continue their studies and find better job opportunities in the future. Their experiences show that they are willing to improve their lives if given the chance.

Overall, teenage pregnancy is not only a personal issue but also a community concern. It is important for families, schools, and local government to provide support, education, and opportunities for young mothers. With proper guidance and support, they can overcome their challenges, take care of their children, and still achieve their goals in life.

CALL TO ACTION

The situation of teenage mothers in Barangay Yook, Buenavista, Marinduque is not only a personal issue but a growing community concern. It calls for immediate and collective action from families, schools, and the local government. Each sector has a vital role to play in supporting young mothers and ensuring a better future for them and their children.

Families are encouraged to foster open communication, guidance, and emotional support for their

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Schools should provide inclusive and flexible learning opportunities that allow young mothers to continue their education. Meanwhile, the local government of Barangay Yook must strengthen reproductive health education programs, establish support groups, and create accessible livelihood and scholarship opportunities for teenage mothers.

These actions are essential in reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy and in empowering young women to rebuild their lives. By promoting awareness, providing mentorship, and creating safe spaces where young mothers can share their experiences, the community can help them make informed and positive life choices.

Now is the time for the entire Barangay Yook community to take action. Through unity, compassion, and active participation, we can advance this advocacy, reduce teenage pregnancy cases, and give young mothers the opportunity to achieve their dreams. With the right support system, they can care for their children while also pursuing their own goals and aspirations.

GALLERY

“A mother with her child”



“A teenage pregnancy”



“A kid who having a dream”



"During our interview in head of the Circulo de Mujeres “



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ABSTRACT

Incest is widely recognized as one of the most hidden, yet significantly damaging forms of child sexual abuse in the Philippines, especially among low-income and rural populations. This qualitative case study has been designed to investigate potential contributing factors that may be associated with individuals suspected of committing incest, using documented case studies of three families from two municipalities in Marinduque (Boac and Gasan). Using detailed case profiles and in-depth interviews, five general areas of contributing factors were identified: (1) living in overcrowded households, (2) lack of a parent or parental figure in the home environment, (3) geographic isolation from medical care and/or community support services, (4) substance abuse (either alcohol, drugs or both) by the abuser and/or other adult family members within the household, and (5) the absence of any form of positive, non-abusive behavior (e.g. warm, caring, loving and supportive) from family members within the community and/or household. Victims of the identified family members in this study were children aged 9–15 years old, while convicted offenders were between the ages of 42 and 51 years old. The three participating families were all classified as being from the lower-middle socioeconomic class and were existing on an extremely unstable income. The national context of violence against children exists within the larger context presented by the 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5) which indicates that large percentages of all Filipino youth (aged 15–24 years) have experienced an unwanted or coerced incident of sexual assault/disorder, highlighting that immediate intervention is critical to stopping this epidemic form of sexual violence occurring within families as a result of the financial inequalities present in the Philippines. An interview with a resource employee from the local community (health and social development worker) provided further context to the ongoing realities regarding incest for individuals living in the Marinduque region. The resource worker explained that three barriers to reporting incidents of incest and/or extra-familial sexual assault include stigma, silence, and lack of knowledge of where to report incidents. Additionally, results from this research provide support for expanded psychosocial service availability, community education initiatives and/or programs.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, incest — described as sexual activity occurring between people related by blood or marriage — is considered one of the taboos and least reported forms of sexual abuse worldwide. In the Philippines it is widely believed that the rate of incest abuse is much higher than what statistics indicate due to victims' and their families' fear, shame and silence caused by cultural norms discouraging them from reporting illicit activity, such as incest, to authorities. According to (2017), many of these victims never report their abuse as majority of the incest cases occur inside their homes and are never acknowledged or addressed by institutions as a recognized problem.

The island province of Marinduque (MIMAROPA) does not escape this plague; Boac ranks 2nd highest for reported incest cases of municipalities, with Gasan municipality ranking 4th highest in (Micronesia) indicating a need for research and community-specific interventions. In spite of this, the body of literature available regarding (incest) within this geographic area is sparse, as are governmental policies to address incest, with policy responses largely generalized rather than being based on empirical evidence for suitable solutions.

A new national survey of Filipino youth aged 15–24 called the 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5), conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute and the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, reveals a number of disturbing trends about their sexual experiences. They found that a large percentage of young Filipinos experienced unwanted or coerced sexual activity, and nearly 20% reported having considered suicide at some point, highlighting the mental health effects when individuals have experienced such behavior. In addition, other YAFS research shows that 62% of young women reported that their first sexual encounter was unwanted (YAFS4, 2013), clearly illustrating that sexual violence is reported with regularity within the context of intimate family settings, the national data supports the need for an examination of sexual violence among youth and young adults.

At the convergence of poverty, family structure and sexual violence, this study has developed a qualitative case study design that will examine three families with documented incest in the island province of Marinduque.

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The purpose of this research project is twofold: to identify characteristics of the families that may have led to the occurrence of incest; and to provide documented evidence of those characteristics that can be used to develop appropriate and effective prevention programs, counselling services, and protective policies at both the barangay and municipal levels in Marinduque.

Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality in Context

This inquiry belongs to the larger discussion regarding Gender & Society, specifically as it relates to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), which requires the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in both public and private arenas. Incest is considered a gender-based act of violence primarily directed toward minor females, and is therefore both a contributor, and a result, of deeply-rooted gender inequality. While the family should function as the principal environment for safety and socialization, it instead becomes a place where men exert their domination of power over women when power relations are not examined and/or challenged.

Research Design

The study is a qualitative and exploratory type of research, employing in-depth interview as a method of determining the demographic profile of the family with incest rape violator, the family history of parents with incest, previous socio-economic conditions of the respondents and the factors present in the family which may have contributed to the occurrence of incest.

Research population

The target subjects are three selected families with incest cases in the Municipality of Bone which is the second to the highest number of incest cases and Gasan as the fourth. The respondents will be the mother, sibling, grandfather and suspected violators of incest. The researchers get their respondents to the given municipalities above base on the willingness and availability of the family with incest.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling was employed in the identification of at least three cases of family with incest cases residing in Boac and in Gasan, Marinduque. The approbation of the respondents of the subject to be part of the study and work ability of the subject was also taken into consideration.

Data Collection Method

The families identified by the researchers participated interviews using a prepared guide. The guide included questions about household composition, socio-economic conditions, living arrangements, family member's relationships, and lifestyle habits. The resource person was interviewed using a separate protocol with questions around stigma, underreporting, institutional response and prevention in the community.

RESULTS

The three children's families have similar low socioeconomic status and are in the same low-income class with little to no income stability from the members of the family's households. All families lived in a single dwelling with many family members, the first family with 6 members, the second family with 10 members, and third family with 11 members, resulting in overcrowded living conditions and very little privacy or space between all family members.

The victims were children ages 9, 14, and 15; and the alleged offenders ages 42-51.

Contributing Factors Identified

Thematic analysis of the interview data yielded five major contributing factors to the occurrence of incest in the identified households:

1. Overcrowding and Lack of Privacy.

In each of the three families, many family members lived in a very small amount of living space. Children often shared a sleeping space with adult males. Because the children had no separate sleeping areas and therefore lacked physical barriers to abuse, incidents of abuse occurred that were not detected by any other members of the family.

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2. Absence of a Protective Parental Figure.

Mothers in each of the families, for a variety of reasons, spent a considerable amount of time away from home, which left their children without supervision or any other type of adult protection. The lack of a main guardian was a major vulnerability in all of the families.

3. Geographic Isolation.

The neighborhoods of these families are very isolated from community services, schools and social service support systems. Because they are so removed from other residents, the chances of children being unable to witness, report or for another adult to report the abuse is extremely low.

4. Substance Abuse.

All of the suspected offenders reported that alcohol was regularly consumed and illegal drugs were used at times. The abuse of substances was a disinhibiting factor with respect to lowering moral boundaries and behavioral boundaries which increased the risk of boundary violations occurring within the family.

5. Normalization of Incestuous Behavior.

In certain households and communities, repeated exposure to incestuous behavior — whether directly experienced or observed — contributed to its normalization. Family members, including mothers, at times minimized or failed to acknowledge the abuse, reinforcing a culture of silence.

YAFS5 National Data

The 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5), conducted by UPPI and the DRDF, interviewed approximately 28,000 Filipino young people (aged 15 to 24). Although the study did not focus solely on incest, its findings about sexual coercion, mental health and the vulnerability of youth create a significant national context for the local cases that are reported here.

According to the YAFS5, almost 20% of young Filipino people (aged 15 – 24) reported having contemplated suicide. This demonstrates that these young people have a substantial psychological burden, which is frequently linked to experiences of trauma, such as sexual abuse. YAFS5 also demonstrates significant increases in the levels of loneliness and depression between 2013 and 2021. These results also are consistent with long-term psychological consequences associated with incest survivors.

YAFS4 (2013) previously reported that 62% of young women with any experience of sexual intercourse experienced their first encounter in an unwanted manner (i.e., forced, coerced, or unplanned). The majority of reported perpetrators were people known to the victim, reflecting patterns seen in the Marinduque cases, wherein abusers were family members and had a position of trust and authority. The earlier findings in YAFS4 from 2013 show that out of the young women who participated, 62% experienced some level of unwanted sexual activity for their first time, whether it was due to force or coercion, or unplanned and therefore unexpected. A majority of the identified abusers were people known to the victim. This is also supported by the Marinduque study, which revealed that the abusers were family members who were in positions of trust and authority.

Combining the YAFS data with the current case study results establishes a clear pattern of sexual coercion in the Philippines, with specific and increased risk factors related to youth in low-income and geographically isolated households.

Interview with Community Resource Person

A semi-structured interview was held with the President of Circulo de las Mujeres de Boac. She provided many thoughtful insights into the dynamics of the community that have both contributed to the continuing occurrence of incest, within the community, and to the lack of incest being reported.

The primary barrier identified by the resource person as preventing families from reporting incest is stigma as it relates to culture:

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"When you have incest, you are shy to approach other people... Their siblings, they have a sexual relationship or they have a child with their grandfather or father. They know how to be shy. They don't want to tell." — Mrs. Ana Marie Hidalgo

During her talk, she mentioned having gone to a barangay where incest was so common that the residents did not consider it wrong any longer. She gave examples of the different types of community interventions that took place as part of Women's club such as holding forums to give out information on how to help mothers and children and providing education on public health to community leaders.

With regard to the need for incest to be treated as a taboo, she said:

"Incest is taboo. It really should be taboo. It means that society should not accept it. It's like a hindrance to those who will do such things. There should be continuous awareness to have information about incest." — Mrs. Ana Marie Hidalgo

She stressed that an effective response to assist survivors must consist of multi-faceted responses from many sectors - i.e., provision of counseling services by social workers; value development provided by faith-based organizations; educational paraprofessionals; and having community leaders involved in monitoring and referring survivors. She also specifically mentioned the need for collaboration between social workers, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, police agencies, and civic/non-profit organizations in cases involving incest.

For survivors of incest, she delivered a message of hope:

"Encourage them to speak up. Don't hide what you are saying. Seek help from religious people. Seek help from social workers or from an organization." — Mrs. Ana Marie Hidalgo

DISCUSSION

This study's results build upon and confirm existing literature concerning incestual behavior's structural and social contributions. Specifically, five factors were identified as contributors to incest, including overcrowding, no parent, geographic distance from others, substance abuse and normalizing behavior. These same structural and social factors have been documented by many similar studies on incest in lesser developed regions of the world. Most of these studies found that the economic difficulties and hardships associated with poverty created the conditions necessary for people to commit incest (Justice & Justice 1976; McClendon 1991).

The unique aspect of the Marinduque cases, however, is the community's acceptance of incest as a normal part of life. One community member's description of a barangay (small village) in which incest is no longer something to be ashamed of illustrates the failure to have an individual moral compass and the failure of the community's collective morality. This supports De la Llana's (1998) argument that the lack of discussion of incest in the Philippines allows incest to continue to occur in a culturally silent manner. When society's ability to sanction behaviour through public disapproval decreases, then the protective barriers placed around incest do not exist.

The YAFS5 results demonstrate the critical need for action. Filipino adolescent mental health continues to deteriorate; many have reported unwanted sexual encounters as a common experience; and a significant number of adolescents have thought about committing suicide.

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Collectively, these statistics depict a generation of adolescents who are experiencing tremendous stress and/or psychological trauma — many of which stem directly from their families. For victims of incest, betrayal by their own families is substantial.

The absence of mothers is especially important. Mothers were not present in the household in each of the 3 cases during the time of the events. This is not to blame the absent mother as they were often working to provide for their families due to economic necessity but rather shows how poverty forces tradeoffs that then leads to vulnerability to children. This supports Mendoza's (n.d.) finding in incest cases in the Philippines where victims hardly ever get justice because the very family systems set up to protect them are themselves compromised due to structural poverty.

Substance abuse was prevalent as a disinhibitory factor in all 3 cases. This supports existing research which has shown that both drugs & alcohol reduce inhibitions & moral restraints (Zambrano, 2017). However, it should also be noted that while substance abuse may function as a trigger/enabler it is not a root cause — underlining patterns of perverse power relations & boundary violations were present regardless of if intoxicated or not.

As discussed by the resource person, community normalization in the barangay presents the most systemic challenge in overcoming the problem of incest. This happens when abusive behaviours are normalised by communities, leading victims of abuse to view the same behaviour as acceptable as well. To break this cycle, individual counselling and education at the community level are required. The resource person indicated that this process has started through forums and awareness campaigns conducted by the Rotary Club in response to the ongoing issues of incest.

Implications for Gender and Society

This study supports the view that incest is primarily a gender-based issue, with all of the victims being female children and all of the offenders being adult men who hold positions of authority within their family structures. This phenomenon is representative of the larger structure of patriarchal power within society, where men have control over women in terms of their physical being, especially in low-income households. Therefore, addressing issues of incest necessitates law enforcement, counselling services, and an alteration of gender roles within both the family and community structures; this is consistent with the goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5.

In addition, the intersections between gender and class are evident throughout the findings. While poverty is not a direct cause of incest, it does create conditions conducive to incest, such as overcrowding, lack of adequate supervision, geographic marginalization, and stress; exacerbating a child's vulnerability to being abused. Consequently, any intervention response that does not address poverty concurrently with psychosocial supports will only address symptoms and not structural causes.

The research demonstrates that the occurrence of incest in the identified Marinduque incidents was not due to a singular component but arose from the coming together of various interrelated components: overcrowding, no parental guidance, geographical isolation, substance abuse and the normalisation of abusive conduct in community settings. All three identified families were structurally impoverished, had large family sizes and limited access to social supports.

CONCLUSION

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The resource person's testimony provides an important humanisation to the findings which indicates that incest remains seriously stigmatized but is also found to be a prevalent reality in certain barangays at the same time. In part, this reality is maintained by the community's own inability to speak about incest within itself. When victims are shameful, mothers downplay the occurrence of incest and neighbours do not verify the victim's or abuser's claims then abusers are tacitly protected.

The national YAFS5 data provide a greater contextual framework for these cases in the context of a greater pattern of sexual coercion and mental health vulnerability for youth in the Philippines. The evidence together provides a requirement for a response that is both community-embedded and community-strong; an agenda that includes awareness and education campaigns, counselling services that are easily accessible to families at risk, increased child protection at the Barangay level, a means to support families who are at risk and a clear referral pathway to law enforcement and social welfare agencies.

As with the rest of the Philippines, incest in Marinduque cannot be solved through silence, shame or isolated individual efforts. Addressing incest will take a united commitment from families, communities, local government and civil society — to identify the problem, assist survivors and remove the conditions that contribute to abuse. As articulated by the speaker, healing is possible; there is a need for every survivor who is prepared to speak to have an entire community that is prepared to listen and take action.



Marinduque State University - Boac Campus
College of Arts and Social Sciences

BUSLO NG *Marinduque*



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BUSLO NG *Marinduque* Rationale

Buslo ng Marinduque (BNM) is not a particularly new or just a rehash of the interdisciplinary research journal of the School of Arts and Sciences. True to its vision of serving as a platform for BA Communication, BA English Language Studies and BS Social Work research. The namesake is a Filipino word for basket, symbolizing the aggregated and curated island knowledge and knowledge. Based on the initial proposal of Prof. Panchito Labay, the Tagalog acronym is “Bunga ng mga Sinaliksik sa Loob ng Marinduque” is tantamount to results of research in Marinduque.

*In addition, BUSLO also stand for “Building Understanding through Systematic Learning and Observation.” This embodies the Marinduque State University (MarSU) journey to becoming a research university though the humble contribution from the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS). Guided by the core principles derived from the CASS research roadmap 2026-30 that can be summed up with **Island Innovation for Impact**. BNM endeavors to promote local studies and scholarship, provide a platform for inter, multi/ transdisciplinary dialogue, inform policy and institutionalize innovation, conserve culture and safeguard heritage of the island and collaborate with foreign/ external scholars.*

The open access journal encompasses a wide array of topics within the CASS programs such as social sciences including but not limited to sociology, anthropology, political science and economics with a focus on community development, social issues and public policy in Marinduque. Moreover, BNM is also concerned with research on social welfare, community services and interventions aiming at improving the quality of life for Marinduque islanders.

In addition, there is a premium for arts and humanities by exploring Marinduque’s cultural heritage through literature, history, philosophy, visual and performing arts with cultural studies. Likewise, language and communication is a priority, studies on local languages, communication practices, media studies and the role of language in cultural identity and social interaction. At the end of the day, other fields of research including collaborative topics from education, allied medicine, business and entrepreneurship, public governance and political science, tourism, natural and physical sciences and technology incorporating island innovation for impact.

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Mascareñas, Janice M. Mayo, Akira Claire A. Mayores, Angielyn G. Mercado, Quency J. Mazon, Kathleen Caye M. Morales, John John S.

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE TEENAGE MOTHERS IN BARANGAY DILI AND PINGGAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GASAN

Deaño, K. F., Morong, J. S., Loto, R. Y.

Thesis Adviser: May Anne C. Bañaga, RSW

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BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING MALE STUDENTS TO PURSUE SOCIAL WORK ACADEMIC PATH IN MARINDUQUE STATE COLLEGE

Mascareñas, Janice M. Mayo, Akira Claire A. Mayores, Angielyn G. Mercado, Quency J. Mazon, Kathleen Caye M. Morales, John John S.

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors influencing male students to pursue a social work academic path at Marinduque State College (MSC). Utilizing a qualitative descriptive research design, a purposive sampling was used to select six male social work students from diverse backgrounds, ages and year levels. To provide a comprehensive perspective. The findings reveal that male students are influenced by a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors. Influences include exposure to the field through peers or family members, perceived career opportunities, and a personal interest in helping others. Cultural expectations and the perceived prestige of the social work profession also play significant roles. However, male students encounter challenges such as adapting to a predominantly female environment and confronting gender stereotypes. Possible interventions to promote gender inclusivity in the BS Social Work Program include advocating for gender-neutral policies, increasing education and awareness about inclusivity, promoting career opportunities and income potential, and ensuring diverse representation. And mentorship within the program.

INTRODUCTION

Social work is a professional and academic discipline that promotes social change, social cohesion, and the empowerment of individuals and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable and marginalized. It focuses on enhancing human well-being and addressing complex social problems through evidence-based practice and advocacy. According to the International Federation of Social Workers (2014),

social work is grounded in the principles of social justice, human rights, and collective responsibility. Despite its vital role in society, the profession remains gendered, with women comprising the majority of practitioners, leading to the continued underrepresentation of men in the field.

Career choice is influenced by a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors. Existing studies indicate that gender norms and societal expectations significantly shape occupational preferences, often discouraging men from entering professions traditionally associated with caregiving roles such as social work, teaching, and nursing (Council on Social Work Education, 2021). In the Philippine context, factors such as family influence, perceived job prestige, and economic considerations further affect students' academic and career decisions. The National Association of Social Workers (2023) highlights the importance of diversity and inclusivity in strengthening the profession's ability to respond to the needs of diverse populations.

However, while many studies have explored women's participation in male-dominated careers, there is limited research focusing on men entering female-dominated professions such as social work. This gap reflects a lack of comprehensive understanding of the motivations, challenges, and influencing factors affecting male participation in the field. Moreover, there is a scarcity of localized studies examining this issue within specific educational institutions.

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In Marinduque State College, male enrollment in the Bachelor of Science in Social Work program remains relatively low, reflecting the broader gender imbalance in the profession. This situation highlights the need to explore the factors that influence male students' decisions to pursue social work as an academic and career path within this institutional context.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors influencing male students to pursue a social work academic path at Marinduque State College. Specifically, it seeks to identify the key factors that motivate or discourage male students from entering the program and to provide insights that may contribute to the development of strategies promoting gender inclusivity and balanced representation in the social work profession.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to anticipate the breaking of gender barriers by determining and understanding the socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors influencing male students to pursue a social work academic path in Marinduque State College (MSC). As such, this study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
 - a. Religious Affiliation; and
 - b. Source of Livelihood?
2. What are the factors influencing male students to pursue a social work academic path in MSC in terms of:
 - a. Socio-economic;
 - b. Cultural; and
 - c. Personal?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the participants being a male student in social work?

4. What possible interventions can be proposed to promote gender inclusivity in the Bachelor of Science in Social Work program?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

- The study is qualitative and uses descriptive research design to answer the specific questions in Chapter one.
- It aims to explore the socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors influencing male students to pursue social work as an academic path.

Research Locale

- This study was conducted in Marinduque State College (MSC) located at Tanza, Boac, Marinduque.
- The institution was chosen as the research site because it had male students in the social work program.

Research Population and Sample

- The respondents of this study were male social work students from Marinduque State College (MSC) who are pursuing a social work academic path, composed of 6 male respondents from different year levels.

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Research Instrument

- This study used interviews to collect qualitative data based on the research questions. It gathered participants' profiles (such as religious affiliation and source of livelihood) and explored their experiences, challenges, and motivations as male social work students through open-ended questions.
- In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain detailed narratives, allowing participants to share personal stories and perspectives. These interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and supported by researchers' notes on non-verbal cues.
- The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns, focusing on the students' lived experiences, perceptions of gender norms, and factors influencing their decision to pursue social work.

Data Gathering Procedures

- The researchers collected data by first obtaining permission from the Social Work faculty of Marinduque State College (Main Campus) to conduct interviews. They prepared validated interview questions to guide the discussion. During the interviews, participants were informed about the study through consent forms that explained its purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. Notes were taken and a digital audio recorder was used with the participants' consent, with the option to stop recording at any time. After the interviews, the data were organized, summarized, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS

The participants' narratives reveal that personal factors strongly influence the decision to pursue social work. Many respondents, such as Jojo, William, Jay Ar, Ricky, and Rene, initially had different career goals (e.g., engineering, education, policing), but shifted due to practical circumstances like failing entrance exams or limited opportunities. This supports findings by Semeijn et al. (2020) and Judge et al. (2020), which emphasize how unexpected situations and personal characteristics shape career paths. Their ability to adjust demonstrates resilience and adaptability, consistent with Eccles and Wigfield (2020), who highlight the importance of self-efficacy and flexibility in career development.

Intrinsic motivations also played a key role. Participants like Rene expressed a genuine passion for helping others, aligning with Ward (2019), who found that service-oriented motivation positively influences career development in social work. Additionally, the importance of emotional intelligence as discussed by Mayer et al. (2016) and Salovey et al. (2021)—is evident, as individuals motivated by compassion are more capable of managing the emotional demands of the profession and building strong client relationships.

Social support systems further influenced decision-making. Participants such as Jojo and Jay Ar benefited from supportive networks, reinforcing Smith and Jones (2019), who stress that self-efficacy and social support are crucial in shaping career choices and sustaining professional goals.

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Despite these motivations, male social work students face several challenges. A major issue is adapting to a female-dominated environment, where participants reported difficulty socializing, feelings of discomfort, and communication barriers. Another significant challenge is gender stereotyping, where they experienced criticism and were labeled as “feminine” or questioned about their masculinity for choosing the course. However, not all participants experienced difficulties; some, like Roy and William, reported minimal challenges, attributing this to personal interest and alignment of skills with the profession.

Overall, the findings highlight that career choice in social work is shaped by a combination of shifting goals, intrinsic motivation, emotional capacity, and social support, while challenges mainly stem from gender-related issues and social perceptions. Addressing these through supportive environments and resilience-building is essential for fostering successful and fulfilling careers in social work.

The narratives of male social work students reveal that they face significant challenges in a female-dominated field, particularly in terms of social adaptation, gender stereotyping, and societal expectations. Participants such as William, Jay Ar, Ricky, and Rene reported difficulty fitting in and socializing with mostly female classmates, often experiencing discomfort, shyness, and a sense of isolation. These experiences support the findings of Schilling et al. (2008), who noted that male students struggle with participation and interaction in female-dominated environments, and Shen-Miller and Smiler (2016), who emphasized the impact of gender imbalance on students’ academic experiences.

Another major challenge is gender stereotyping, as shared by Jojo and Jay Ar, who experienced ridicule and were questioned about their masculinity for choosing a “female-oriented” profession. These experiences align with Thobela (2020), which highlights the stigma and marginalization faced by men in social work due to societal expectations and traditional gender norms.

However, not all participants reported difficulties. Roy and William indicated minimal challenges, attributing their positive experiences to a strong passion for helping others and alignment with the values of social work. This supports Smith and Jones (2019), who emphasized that intrinsic motivation, personal values, and self-efficacy can influence career success and help individuals overcome barriers.

Overall, the findings show that while male social work students commonly face adaptation issues and societal stigma, personal factors such as motivation, resilience, and self-efficacy play a crucial role in shaping their experiences. The study highlights the need for inclusive and supportive educational environments to address gender-related challenges and promote diversity within the social work profession.

The narratives of male social work students reveal that they face significant challenges in a female-dominated field, particularly in adapting to gender imbalances, dealing

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with stereotypes, and managing societal expectations. Participants such as William, Jay Ar, Ricky, and Rene experienced difficulty socializing and fitting in, often feeling shy, isolated, or uncomfortable in predominantly female classes. These experiences support Schilling et al. (2008), who found that male students struggle with participation and interaction in such environments, and Shen-Miller and Smiler (2016), who emphasized the negative impact of gender imbalance on academic and social engagement.

Another major challenge is gender stereotyping, as highlighted by Jojo and Jay Ar, who faced ridicule and were questioned about their masculinity for choosing social work. These findings align with Thobela (2020), which discusses the stigmatization and marginalization of men in female-dominated professions due to societal norms and expectations.

However, not all participants reported difficulties. Roy and William experienced minimal challenges, attributing this to their passion for helping others and alignment with the values of social work. This reflects Smith and Jones (2019), which emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation, personal values, and self-efficacy in overcoming barriers and achieving career satisfaction.

Overall, the findings show that while male students commonly face adaptation issues and social stigma, individual factors such as motivation and resilience can shape their experiences. The study highlights the need for inclusive and supportive educational environments to address gender-related challenges and promote diversity in the social work profession.

The participants proposed several interventions to promote gender inclusivity in the BS Social Work program, focusing on policy, awareness, career promotion, and representation. First, they emphasized the need for gender-neutral policies, where admission and participation are free from gender bias. Jojo and Rene highlighted that social work should be seen as a profession open to all, reinforcing the idea that both men and women are equally capable. This aligns with gender equality frameworks that advocate for inclusive institutional policies to reduce discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

Second, participants stressed the importance of education and awareness campaigns. Jay Ar suggested informing younger students that social work is not limited to women but is a professional field accessible to everyone. This supports literature such as Shen-Miller and Smiler (2016), which emphasizes that increasing awareness can challenge stereotypes and encourage male participation in female-dominated fields.

Third, the promotion of career opportunities and income potential was identified as a key strategy. Participants noted that misconceptions about social work being low-paying or “feminine” discourage men, but highlighting diverse job opportunities and financial stability can attract more male students. This is consistent with studies like Thobela (2020), which indicate that addressing misconceptions about the profession can reduce stigma and improve male engagement.

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Lastly, participants highlighted the importance of representation and mentorship, particularly the visibility of male role models such as instructors and student ambassadors. William emphasized that having male educators and representatives can influence incoming students and normalize male participation. This reflects findings from Schilling et al. (2008), which underscore the value of mentorship and representation in reducing feelings of isolation and increasing student engagement.

Overall, the suggested interventions demonstrate that promoting gender inclusivity requires a multifaceted approach, including policy reform, awareness initiatives, career promotion, and strong representation. These strategies align with existing literature, which emphasizes the need for supportive and inclusive environments to challenge stereotypes, reduce stigma, and encourage diversity in social work education.

The participants proposed several key interventions to promote gender inclusivity in the BS Social Work program, including gender-neutral policies, education and awareness, promotion of career opportunities, and representation with mentorship. These interventions collectively aim to challenge gender stereotypes and create a more inclusive academic and professional environment.

Advocacy for gender-neutral policies, as emphasized by Jojo and Rene, highlights the importance of equal treatment and non-discrimination regardless of gender. This aligns with literature stating that inclusive policies foster fairness and allow individuals to be evaluated based

on competence rather than gender (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Blustein, 2017). Similarly, Rene's perspective reinforces the need to challenge traditional gender roles, supporting the idea that both men and women are equally capable in helping professions (Shinn, 2015; Lent, 2020). Education and awareness, as discussed by Jay Ar and Rene, are essential in addressing misconceptions about Social Work. Informing students that the field is open to all genders helps reduce bias and encourages participation. This supports existing studies which emphasize that awareness and learning interventions can reshape attitudes and promote inclusivity (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Blustein, 2017).

The promotion of career opportunities and income potential, highlighted by Ricky, addresses practical motivations for career choice. Research shows that individuals are more likely to pursue careers with clear job prospects and financial stability (Greenhaus et al., 2018; Lent, 2020). By presenting Social Work as a viable and rewarding profession, gender stereotypes can be reduced, attracting a more diverse group of students.

Lastly, representation and mentorship, emphasized by William, play a critical role in influencing students' aspirations. Having diverse role models, including male educators, helps normalize gender diversity in the field and encourages underrepresented groups to participate. Literature supports that mentorship and representation significantly impact career development and inclusivity (Shinn, 2015; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

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Overall, the participants' suggestions are strongly supported by existing literature, demonstrating that policy reform, education, career promotion, and mentorship are effective strategies in fostering gender inclusivity in Social Work education.

To support the research findings regarding the cultural, personal, and socioeconomic factors affecting male students pursuing social work at MSC, an interview was conducted with Mr. Joel Recella, a representative of KALIPI. He stressed that there are no jobs that are only for one gender. This shows a change in cultural beliefs that encourages men to work in fields where women are more common, like social work.

He also said that gender equality shouldn't just be talked about during Women's Month; it should be something that everyone does every day. According to him people should think and act in ways that promote equality every day. This backs up what the study found: that being aware of and having everyday experiences helps students become more open-minded.

In addition, he also said that a person's gender should never limit their preferred course or profession, whether it is male-dominated or female-dominated. He said that people's opinions are slowly changing, and many people now think that everyone has the same opportunities, whether in school or at work.

Discussion

Gender equality in education emphasizes equal access, participation, and opportunities regardless of gender. In the context of this study, the findings revealed that male students continue to enter and persist in a field traditionally dominated by females, despite socio-economic limitations, cultural expectations, and personal challenges. The presence of male students in the social work program, along with their diverse backgrounds and motivations, reflects an existing shift in gender participation within the academic setting. However, the experiences shared by the participants, particularly their difficulties in adapting to a female-dominated environment and the influence of gendered expectations, indicate that gender-based differences in educational experiences still exist.

These findings are closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all genders. The participation of male students in social work demonstrates the breaking of traditional gender roles, as they pursue a profession commonly associated with women. The identified socio-economic factors, such as exposure, peer influence, career opportunities, and financial constraints, show that access to opportunities is not solely determined by gender but also shaped by social and economic conditions.

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Cultural factors, including family expectations and perceptions of professional status, further reflect how gender roles continue to influence decision-making. Meanwhile, personal factors such as shifting career goals and the desire to help others indicate that individual agency also plays a role in overcoming gender barriers.

At the same time, the challenges encountered by male students, particularly in adjusting to a female-dominated environment, highlight the need for more inclusive academic spaces. These findings show that while progress toward gender equality is evident through increased male participation, there are still existing gaps in terms of inclusion and acceptance within the learning environment. Overall, the results present the current conditions of male students in social work and reflect both the progress and continuing challenges in achieving gender equality in education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and interviews, the study concludes that male social work students effectively break traditional stereotypes, proving that competence and compassion are not defined by gender.

Despite facing initial doubts and societal biases shared during the interviews, they demonstrate resilience and distinct strengths that complement and enrich the profession.

Their presence brings diverse perspectives, promotes true gender equality, and creates a more inclusive environment within the field.

Ultimately, breaking these barriers highlights the importance of recognizing individual merit and passion over societal norms, encouraging more men to pursue the vocation without hesitation.

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Set B: 1-B

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE TEENAGE MOTHERS IN BARANGAY DILI AND PINGGAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GASAN

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BUSLO NG
Marinduque

Lived Experience of the Teenage Mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan in the Municipality of Gasan

Fariñas, Mhary Karylle N., Epa, Khristine M., Dumaran, Juliana Hernandez, Sofia Anne S., Del Mundo, Jasper

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to Lived Experience of the Teenage Mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan in the Municipality of Gasan. It also sought to determine the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy at Dili, and Pinggan. Purposive sampling procedures were used in selecting respondents. The respondents of this study are ten (10) teenage mothers. A Focus Group Discussion Guide and observation were used in gathering data. Questionnaires were the major tool to employ qualitative data for the study. Based on the result of the conducted focus group discussions in barangay Dili and Pinggan. The study showed that the demographic profile; 1. Out of (10) respondents: (6) engaged in premarital sex at the age of sixteen, (3) at the age of (15) and (1) at the age of (17). 2. Teenagers first conceived their child at the age range of 16- 18. Respondent's family income ranges from Php 2,000- Php 18,000. The study showed that the causes of teenage pregnancy were; 1. Poverty, 2. Low educational attainment, 3. Family situation: absence of either mother or father, 4. Lack of parental guidance and supervision, 5. Opportunities to engage in premarital sex and, 6. Non-use of contraceptives. The study also showed the effects of teenage pregnancy were; 1. Drop out of school, 2. Decrease opportunity to go back to school, 3. Less economic opportunities, 4. Decrease opportunity to socialize and, 5. Lack of skills in child rearing. The positive effects were; 1. No complications during labor/birthing, 2. Easily accepted by the family and, 3. Parents take responsibility to the mother and child.

Keywords: *Teenage Pregnancy, Teenage Mothers, Family Income, Parental Guidance, Family Situation, Parental Responsibility*

INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant global concern, affecting individuals, families, and communities. It is often associated with premarital sexual activity and continues to be viewed as a social issue due to its long-term impact on the health, education, and future opportunities of young women. In the Philippines we believe in the saying of our National Hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal that “Youth is the hope of our mother land”. In their hand lies the future generations to follow. But as we see from the situation nowadays, what we are expecting from the youth in the contrary of that saying. Teenagers are prone to pregnancy. Almost every year there is a rapid increase on the number of pregnant youths.

The recent national data reveals a significant decline in teenage pregnancy in the Philippines. According to the 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5), the rate of Filipino girls aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing was 6.3% in 2002, peaked at 13.7% in 2013, and dropped to 6.8% in 2021. This marks a 50% decrease over eight years, representing over 386,000 young females. The study shows that the youth engaging in premarital sex and early childbearing has decreased. Based on 10,949 respondents, 87% of male youth and 67% of female youth had their first sexual experience before marriage. Based on 10,949 respondents, 87% of male youth and 67% of female youth had their first sexual experience before marriage

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Review of existing data shows that in the six municipalities in Marinduque, Gasan has the largest number of cases of teenage pregnancy. There are ninety-nine (99) teenaged girls from Gasan who gave birth in the year 2016. Out of the 25 barangays in Gasan, Barangay Dili, has the highest cases of teenage pregnancy followed by Barangay Pinggan.

On the light of this alarming situation, the researcher decided to conduct this study “Lived experience of teenage mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan in the Municipality of Gasan”, in order to contribute crucial information in order to come up with a recommendation in the Municipality.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to understand the lived experiences of teenage mothers. This design was chosen to gather in-depth insights into their personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives regarding teenage pregnancy.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Barangay Dili and Barangay Pinggan located in the Municipality of Gasan, Province of Marinduque, Philippines. These rural communities were selected due to the presence of teenage mothers and the relevance of the issue in these areas.

Research Population and Sample

The respondents of the study consisted of ten (10) teenage mothers from Barangay Dili and Barangay Pinggan. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who met the criteria of being teenage mothers and willing to share their experiences. This method ensured that the data collected was relevant and rich in information.

Research Instrument

The researchers used multiple tools to gather qualitative data, including:
Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide – to facilitate group discussions and explore shared experiences among the respondents.
Questionnaire – to collect supporting information and organize responses systematically.
Observation – to record behaviors, interactions, and non-verbal cues during the discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The study explored the lived experiences of teenage mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan, Municipality of Gasan, through in-depth interviews with selected participants. After analyzing the responses, several major themes emerged that reflect their realities, struggles, coping strategies, and personal growth. The findings show that teenage mothers experience challenges in emotional, educational, financial, and social aspects, while also demonstrating resilience and maturity as they adjust to motherhood.

Most participants described pregnancy as unplanned and unexpected. Feelings of fear, confusion, and anxiety were common upon learning about their condition. Many expressed concern regarding the reaction of their families and the community. Teenage pregnancy brought sudden changes in their lives, particularly in terms of responsibilities and future plans. This indicates that adolescent mothers often experience emotional distress during the early stage of pregnancy due to lack of readiness and uncertainty.

Another common experience among participants was the interruption of education.

Several teenage mothers stopped schooling during pregnancy or after childbirth because of childcare responsibilities, financial limitations, or embarrassment. Some participants shared regrets about not finishing school on time. This suggests that early motherhood may hinder educational attainment and reduce opportunities for personal and career development.

Many participants also revealed struggles related to financial support. Since most were unemployed and dependent on parents or partners, meeting the daily needs of the child became difficult. Expenses for milk, diapers, healthcare, and food created stress within the household. This indicates that teenage motherhood may lead to economic hardship, especially when income sources are unstable or limited.

Despite these challenges, participants emphasized the importance of family support. Parents, siblings, and relatives often helped with childcare, financial assistance, and emotional encouragement. For many teenage mothers, family acceptance reduced feelings of shame and helped them adjust to motherhood. This highlights the significant role of the family as a support system during difficult transitions.

Some participants experienced criticism, gossip, or judgment from members of the community because of becoming mothers at a young age. These negative experiences affected their self-esteem and confidence. However, others learned to ignore public opinion and focus on raising their children. This shows that social stigma remains a challenge for teenage mothers in the community.

Although teenage motherhood brought hardships, many participants shared that becoming mothers helped them become more responsible and mature. They learned to prioritize their child's needs, manage time, and make better decisions. Some participants viewed motherhood as motivation to improve their lives and work toward a better future for their children.

To further support the qualitative findings, an interview was conducted with Ma'am Sheryl M. Podra, GAD Coordinator of Marinduque State University (MARSU). She discussed how the GAD Focal Point System helps and supports teenage mothers through various programs and initiatives. According to her, the GAD Focal Point offers Youth Reproductive Health Workshops to educate teenagers regarding reproductive health, responsible decision-making, family planning, and the possible consequences of early pregnancy. These workshops aim to increase awareness among adolescents and empower them to make informed choices.

She also shared that the university uses MARSU postings, bulletin boards, and official announcements to spread information about teenage pregnancy awareness, available support services, and activities related to adolescent welfare. In addition, the GAD Unit Facebook Page serves as an online platform for awareness campaigns, peer education, and life skills development programs that can reach students and young people more effectively.

Furthermore, Ma'am Podra emphasized the importance of collaboration with local schools, barangay health centers, and organizations to provide counseling, healthcare access, and preventive programs. She explained that cooperation among institutions is essential in addressing teenage pregnancy and supporting adolescent mothers.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the lived experiences of teenage mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan involve both struggles and transformation. Early pregnancy often caused emotional stress, interrupted education, and created financial burdens.

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These findings relate to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes adolescent reproductive health services, mental wellness, and support systems for young mothers.

The disruption of schooling among participants reflects the importance of SDG 4: Quality Education, which promotes inclusive and equitable access to education. Teenage mothers need opportunities to continue their studies through flexible learning programs, school reintegration, and educational assistance.

Financial dependence and limited resources experienced by participants connect to SDG 1: No Poverty, this also become one of the factors why teenage pregnancy exist and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, as young mothers often belong to vulnerable groups needing livelihood opportunities and equal access to services.

Family support emerged as an important source of strength, helping participants cope emotionally and practically with motherhood. This reinforces SDG 3, as strong family relationships contribute to resilience, emotional wellness, and healthy child development. The health of the mother during pregnancy and after also connects with the SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being.

Negative social perceptions and community stigma remain obstacles for teenage mothers. These issues are related to SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, which advocate respect, inclusion, and equal treatment for women and marginalized sectors.

At the same time, motherhood became a turning point that encouraged responsibility, maturity, and motivation for self-improvement. This reflects SDG 5, which supports women's empowerment and opportunities for personal growth.

The interview with Ma'am Sheryl M. Podra further highlights the value of institutional support through reproductive health seminars, awareness campaigns, and counseling services. Her emphasis on partnerships among schools, barangay health centers, and organizations aligns with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, showing that cooperation among institutions is essential in preventing teenage pregnancy and supporting adolescent mothers.

Overall, providing a supportive environment through families, schools, local government units, and health workers can help teenage mothers overcome difficulties and build a better future for themselves and their children while contributing to the achievement of SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 17.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the lived experiences of teenage mothers in Barangay Dili and Pinggan in the Municipality of Gasan are not easy. At a young age, they are already facing big responsibilities that are usually meant for adults. Some of them are struggle with money because they need to provide for their baby while still depending on their family. Some had to stop going to school, which makes it harder for them to reach their dreams and find better opportunities in the future.

Aside from financial problems, they also experience emotional challenges. They feel stress, fear, and sometimes regret because their lives changed suddenly. Some of them also face judgment from other people, which can affect their confidence and mental well-being. Even with these difficulties, many teenage mothers try their best to stay strong. They show love and care for their children and are willing to make sacrifices just to give them a better life.

The study also shows how important the support of family, friends, and the community is. Those who receive guidance, understanding, and help are more able to cope with their situation. Support can come in many forms, such as emotional encouragement, financial help, and advice on how to take care of their child.

Overall, this study highlights the need to give more attention to teenage mothers. There should be programs that help them continue their education, learn parenting skills, and find ways to support themselves. It is also important to educate young people about the responsibilities of parenthood to help prevent early pregnancy. By giving proper support and opportunities, teenage mothers can still build a better future for themselves and their children.

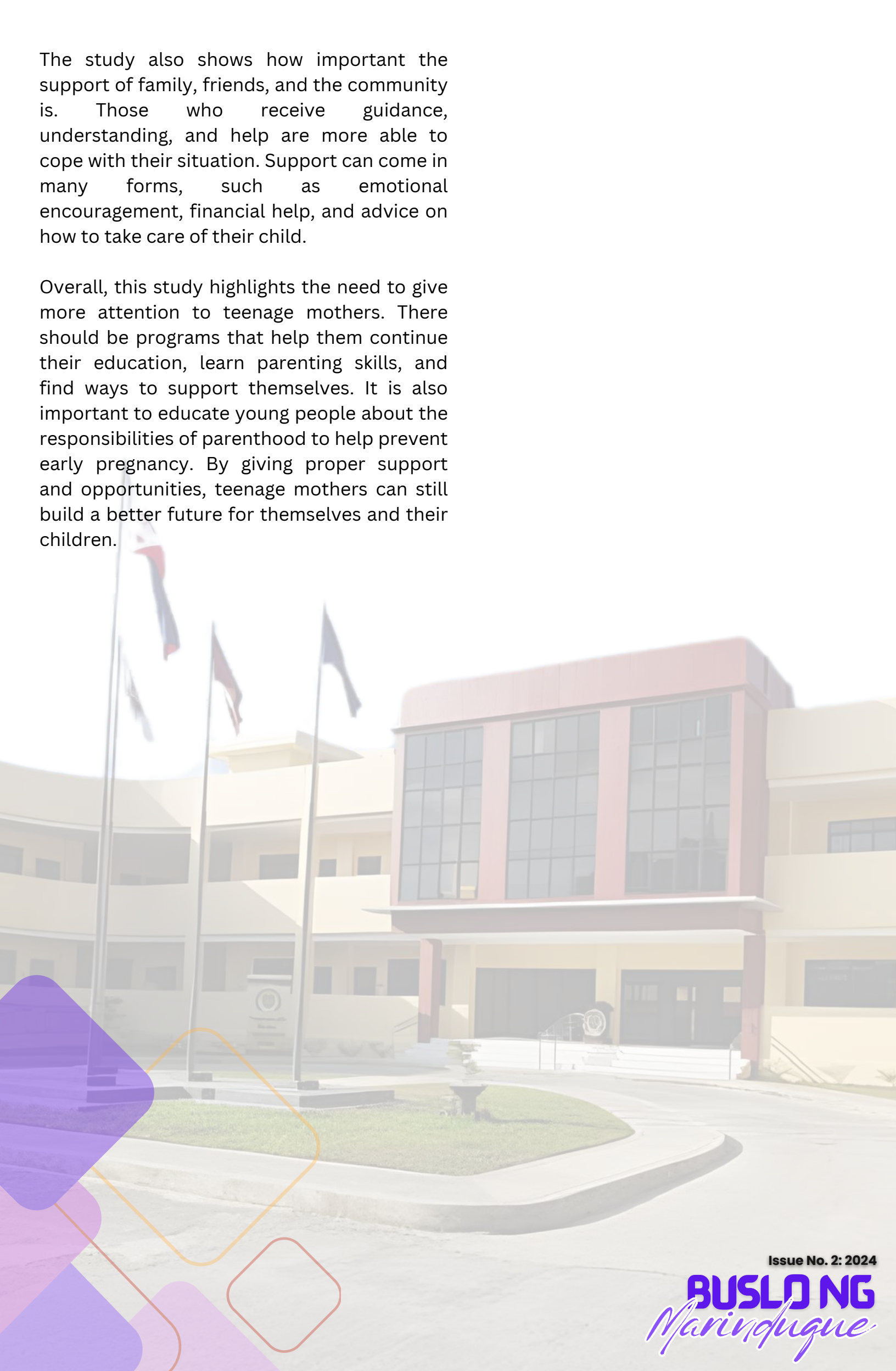


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Bachelor of Science in Social Work
Set A: 1-A

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

Issue No. 2: 2025

BUSLO NG
Marinduque

Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Anti Violence Against Women and Their Children

ABSTRACT

This study intended to determine the challenges encountered by selected barangays in Boac, Marinduque in implementing Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004. The study used descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative methods. Datas were collected through surveys and interviews from selected barangays identified by the Philippine National Police (PNP) as having high VAWC cases. The data were analyzed using percentage, weighted mean, and thematic analysis. The results showed that the implementation of RA 9262 is generally effective in terms of policies, services, and resources, but financial support is still limited. Information campaigns on the other hand, are present but still require further development. The study also found challenges such as victims' reluctance to report cases, influence of family members discouraging legal action for the sake of the family's reputation, lack of awareness of legal rights, and low participation of men in VAWC programs. The study comes to the conclusion that despite the law's implementation, barangays continues to face challenges that limits the legislation's efficiency. It is suggested to improve awareness campaigns, services, and enhance community education on VAWC.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women refers to various types of gender-based act that results to physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. Threats and loss of liberty are examples of this action. This issue directly challenges Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16, which promotes justice and equal protection for all.

In the Philippines, The Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 protects women and their children from abuse by their current or former partners. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm. According to a 2018 World Health Organization study covering 161 countries, about 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, cases increased as women faced greater exposure to abusive partners and limited access to support. In the Philippines, the Commission on Population and Development reported that 25% of adults observed mistreatment to women, while 11% of Filipinas experienced physical violence and 14% experienced sexual or emotional abuse. The Philippine National Police recorded 19,743 cases of violence against women in 2019, with most cases involving violations of the VAWC law. Interviews with members of Bila-Bila (The Boac LGBTQIA+ Association) support these findings.

Their president, Alvin M. Nacawili, emphasized strict law fulfillment and early education about rights, while another member highlighted the demand for equal treatment, regardless of gender identity. These insights reinforce the importance of inclusive protection and justice for all.

This study aims to determine the challenges in the implementation of the Anti-VAWC Act of 2004 experienced by barangays in Boac, Marinduque. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) which aims to ensure justice and equal protection for all.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aims to determine the “Challenges Encountered on The Implementation of Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2004 in Boac Marinduque” and answer the following question:

1. What is the profile of the selected barangays in the municipality of Boac, Marinduque in terms of:
 - 1.1 Population
 - 1.2 Crime Rates on the Violence against Women and Children
2. What is the level of Implementation of RA 9262 in the selected Barangays of the municipality of Boac, Marinduque in terms of:
 - 2.1 Information and Educational Campaign
 - 2.2 Policy Relatedness
 - 2.3 Qualifications Resources
 - 2.4 Personnel and Officer’s
 - 2.5 Establishment and Finance
 - 2.6 Services Implementation
3. What are the challenges Encountered by the Barangay in the Implementation of RA 9262?

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The descriptive method was used in the study in order to gather data. The research also utilized Qualitative and Quantitative questions to identify the challenges encountered in the implementation of Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004 in Boac Marinduque.

RESEARCH LOCALE

This research was conducted in Boac Marinduque focusing on nine barangays in Boac were selected in this study which in Mercado, Tanza, Sawi, Ihatub, Balimbing, Santol, Amoingon, Caganhao, and Buliasnin, identified by the PNP data as having a cases of VAWC. It aims to examine the challenges in implementing the Anti-VAWC Act of 2004 during the first semester of AY 2021-2022.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The respondents of this study consist of the nine barangays in the Municipality of Boac, Marinduque with the highest rate of Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) cases. The study used a purposive sampling method. The respondents were identified based on data provided by the Boac PNP. The barangays included Mercado, Tanza, Sawi, Ihatub, Balimbing, Santol, Amoingon, Caganhao, and Buliasnin, and were represented by their respective Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (Anti-VAWC) desks.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The primary research instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire consisting of the three parts: (I) the demographic profile of the barangay; (II) the level of implementation, measured using a Likert scale, and (III) the challenges encountered, presented as a open-minded question. This was accompanied by a structured interview obtain information not included in the docket. Encountered in the Implementation of Anti-Violence against women and Children Act of 2004 I Tanza, Boac Marinduque was sent to the selected barangays.

3. After conducting the survey, the researchers analyzed the gathered data using Percentage formula, Likert scale, and Thematic analysis.

DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The procedures that the researchers conducted in order to obtain the necessary data in the study includes:

1. A letter of consent to have the rate of VAWC will be sent to the Municipality PNP Headquarters. The selected respondents was based on the gathered data. Then, the consent letter to conduct a survey about the Challenges.
2. As a sign of respect for the participants' rights, no harm came to them throughout the study. Their dignity was given importance as part of the research process, and their consent was obtained before the study began. The researchers also protected the participants' privacy and confidentiality, along with their safety and rights. To ensure the quality of the research, communication was clear, honest, and transparent in gathering accurate information. Any form of bias was not allowed and was avoided.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was gathered via questionnaire and analyzed statistically to examine relationships and detect errors. The percentage formula ($P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$) and weighted mean equations ($WM = \frac{WV}{N}$; $GWM = \frac{TWM}{N}$) were applied. A 5-point Likert scale interpreted responses: 4.21–5.00 (Fully Implemented), 3.41–4.20 (Implemented), 2.61–3.40 (Neutral), 1.81–2.60 (Partially Implemented), and 1.00–1.80 (Not Implemented). Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data to identify patterns through themes.

FINDINGS

I. Demographic Profile of the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Boac, Marinduque.

In terms of population distribution, the male population aged 0–11 months, 1–17 years old, and 18–59 years old is higher than the female population. However, this pattern is reversed among individuals aged 60 years old and above, where females outnumber males. In terms of crime rate, the barangays have recorded several cases of Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC), including 22 physical abuse cases, 1 sexual abuse case, 7 psychological abuse cases, and 11 economic abuse cases from the top three barangays with the highest VAWC rates in Boac. In contrast, only a small number of these cases were formally investigated by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), Philippine National Police (PNP), Barangay Protection Order (BPO) authorities, and medical personnel. Major concerns include the uncooperativeness of callers or victims, as some abused women are hesitant to disclose complete information since they are still in a state of shock.

II. Level of Implementation of RA 9262 in the selected barangays of the municipality of Boac Marinduque.

In terms of policy relatedness, services and physical resources, the results showed that 4.61 got the highest weighted average mean and was fully implemented in the selected barangays of the municipality of Boac, Marinduque. While financing on the other hand, resulted with 3.67 as the highest weighted average mean. Since Financial resources are available from Priority Assistance Development Funds (PDAF) from legislator was partially implemented. This means that although financial resources were available, the funds were not fully used in VAWC related programs. Information and Educational Campaigns resulted with the weighted average mean of 4.29, however, specific numbers were not fully implemented which results to further needs of ongoing VAWC campaigns that could inform the community about their rights.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study confirm that selected barangays in Boac, Marinduque face challenges in implementing RA 9262. Although the law is generally being carried out, there are still difficulties, particularly because many survivors choose not to continue filing cases. Additionally, barangays struggle to engage men in seminars, orientations, and other VAWC related activities, as many are occupied with providing for their families. Based on these results, it is necessary to review and create improved strategies to raise awareness among residents especially men about VAWC. Furthermore, both barangay VAW desk officers and other officials should be continuously involved in training to enhance their capability in handling VAWC cases.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed of:

1. Development of Moral Values and Character Conduct seminars, lectures, and character- building activities for all genders to reinforce moral values and promote social responsibility.
2. Establishment of Barangay Monitoring Programs Organize barangay task forces to monitor VAWC-related cases, particularly offenders, in coordination with the DSWD.
3. Strengthening of Psychosocial and Rehabilitation Services Enhance psychosocial support and rehabilitation programs with the MSWDO to ensure proper care, recovery, and protection for victims.
4. Implementation of Regular School-Based Awareness Programs Conduct regular symposiums and seminars on gender sensitivity and VAWC to raise students' understanding of their rights and obligations.

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LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE BEKIS OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY IN MARINDUQUE

*Winnie Jane Obani, Monique Pedernal,
Chelxy Paglinawan, Jenny Rose Perin
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BUSLO NG
Marinduque

Level of Acceptance Bekis of Immediate Family in Marinduque

Winnie Jane Obani, Monique Pedernal, Chelxy Paglinawan, Jenny Rose Perin, Ashly Nicole Prieto, Clarion Nabing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the level of acceptance of “bekis” (gay individuals) within immediate families has become an important area of inquiry in understanding gender dynamics and family relationships. In the context of Marinduque, a province characterized by strong adherence to traditional and religious values, family acceptance is often shaped by cultural norms that influence perceptions of gender and sexuality. “Ang salitang beki doon sa context ng salitang LGBT pag tiningnan natin siya. Yu’ng Beki kasi as ‘yong tagalog or colloquial word natin. Pag sa layman’s term, tawag ay “bakla”. Kaya, sa LGBTQIA dito natin ina-identify yung gender orientation. Kaya pag sinabing Beki, “bakla” siya. Pero it doesn’t mean na although ‘yong Beki mas malawak, mas marami siya. Sa LGBT kasi gender orientation na ang ina-identify.” – A. Nakacawili (Pres. Of Bila-Bila LGBTQIA+ Association in Boac)

As of 2026, the LGBTQ community in Marinduque—widely known as Bekis—remains a cornerstone of the province’s creative and service sectors, though they now navigate a shifting legal landscape following a historic national judicial update. According to the Supreme Court, a landmark ruling on February 10, 2026, officially recognized the right of same-sex couples to co-own property under Article 148 of the Family Code, provided there is proof of actual financial contribution. While the province’s total population is estimated at 226,522 for the 2024–2026 period, national surveys by WR Numero Research indicate that approximately 5% of Filipinos now openly identify as LGBTQIA+, suggesting a local community of several thousand individuals across the six municipalities.

Posibble reason why only a few openly admit that they are gay is “Because of their family. The way treat them. Kaya kahit sa sarili niya alam niyang siya’y beki, nahiihiya siyang i-express. So, sila yong tinatawag naming “closet”. Sila yong mga Beki na alam ang kanilang tunay na kasarian nguniy wala silang curage na sabihin o i-express nila yong kanilang gender orientation.” – A. Nacawili (Pres. Of Bila-Bila LGBTQIA+ Association in Boac)

Current 2026 data reflects a persistent gap in local protections; while cities like Quezon City have expanded their inclusive programs, Marinduque still lacks a comprehensive provincial anti-discrimination ordinance. This absence is particularly felt in schools, where reports from The Trevor Project show that 62% of LGBTQ youth in the Philippines experience symptoms of depression and anxiety due to persistent social stigma. In response, local grassroots organizations like the Bila-Bila LGBTQIA+ Association of Boac have intensified their efforts, becoming vital in fostering inclusive spaces and advocating for the safety and equal rights of “Bekis” against harassment. “Ang pagtanggap ay nagsisimula sa ating sarili despite kung ano nga ba ang kanilang gender orientation. Ang pagiging Bekis ay mas madaling matanggap ng family mo at ng society kahit ‘di mo baguhin ang sarili mo. Ang kailangan lang ay realization at pagtanggap ka, madali mo nang mai-express kung sino ka talaga.

Kahit maraming hamon, we need to express ourselves sa lahat ng bagay para mag excel kami. May mga activities kami na talagang pinapakita namin para madali kaming matanggap. Kumbaga, as part of the community and family may mga activities kaming ginagawa, “nakiki-collab” ang tawag ngayon. Kaya pag sinabing Beki, hindi salot sa lipunan – kundi, makabuluhang ihemplo ng lipunan.” – A. Nacawili (Pres. of Bila-Bila LGBTQIA+ Association in Boac).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative method to evaluate the level of Acceptance of bekis” among their immediate family in Marinduque. The researchers gathered data using a survey questionnaire distributed via Google forms for convenience and accessibility. A total of 110 participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling method. These respondents were immediate family members of individuals identified as bekis .The questionnaire included questions that measured their attitudes, beliefs,and level of acceptance, using response options such as disagree, neutral, agree, and yes or no.

After collecting all the data, the researchers analyzed the responses to determine if there was any relationship between the respondent’s demographic profiles,and their views on LGBTQ+individuals and policies.Overall, this method helped the researchers better understand how families in Marinduque accept “bekis,” and gave useful insights into family attitudes and social perspectives in the community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 110 respondents from Marinduque. In terms of age, most of the respondents belong to the 18 to 30 years old age group. In terms of sex, the majority of the respondents are female, with 74 respondents or 67.3% of the total participants. Regarding educational attainment, most of the respondents are college students, with 47 participants.

In terms of religion, the majority of the respondents are Roman Catholic, accounting for 107 out of the 110 respondents. When categorized based on their relationship with the “bekis,” most respondents identified themselves as cousins.

Based on the gathered data, the results show that many families in Marinduque accept “bekis,” but the level of acceptance varies among family members. Some respondents demonstrate full support and acceptance, while others show partial acceptance, particularly among certain relatives and siblings.

The findings suggest that family acceptance is present but influenced by several factors. Age may play a role in shaping attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals, as younger people tend to be more open-minded and are more exposed to discussions about gender diversity. The higher number of female respondents may also influence the results since women are often more expressive and understanding in family relationships.

Education also appears to be an important factor in shaping acceptance. Since many respondents are college students, they may have greater exposure to information and discussions about LGBTQ issues, which can contribute to increased awareness and understanding.

Religion, particularly Roman Catholicism, may also influence attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals. While religious teachings emphasize values such as love, compassion, and respect, traditional beliefs may still limit the level of full acceptance among some individuals.

The lower level of acceptance observed among some relatives indicates that stigma and lack of understanding still exist within certain family members, particularly within the extended family. As a result, some “bekis” may still experience misunderstanding or limited support from their relatives.

These findings can be related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10: Reduced Inequalities, which promotes equality and inclusion for all individuals regardless of their identity. In addition, the findings can also be connected to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Gender Equality, which promotes equal rights, respect, and opportunities for all individuals regardless of gender identity or expression. Promoting acceptance of LGBTQ individuals within families contributes to creating a more inclusive and equal society.

The results are also supported by the ideas of Nacawili, president of the Bila Bila LGBTQIA Association, who emphasized the importance of self-realization and self-acceptance among LGBTQ individuals. According to Nacawili, when individuals understand and accept their gender orientation, it becomes easier for them to face society and seek acceptance from others.

Furthermore, Nacawili highlighted that family acceptance serves as a crucial support system for LGBTQ individuals. When families provide love, understanding, and support, it allows LGBTQ individuals to feel valued and confident within their communities.

The findings indicate that acceptance of “bekis” in families in Marinduque is gradually increasing, but there is still a need for greater awareness, education, and open communication in order to achieve full acceptance and equality.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that “bekis” in Marinduque are generally accepted by their immediate families, though the level of acceptance differs among family members. With the total of 110 respondents, these are the members of LGBTQIA+ community who identified as “beki”. While many respondents show strong support for gays, others express only partial acceptance, particularly among extended relatives, indicating that some stigma and misunderstanding still persist and it is not fully accepted by their families.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that there is no significant relationship between the respondents’ demographic characteristics and their attitudes and beliefs toward the LGBT community and related policies. This suggests that acceptance is influenced more by personal perspectives and experiences rather than factors such as age, sex, education, or religion alone. This findings can also be related in Sustainable development goals 5 and 10: gender equality and reducing inequalities because every gender needs to be accepted and not be misjudged. These goals are promoting equal rights and opportunities for every individual regardless of their gender identity. Additionally, Mr. Nacawili, the founder of Bila-bila organization in Marinduque, said that acceptance begins in ourselves, we cannot seek understanding on someone if we do not accept our true identity and learn to value every part of it.

Overall, while family acceptance of “bekis” is evident and gradually improving, there is still a need to strengthen awareness, education, and open communication within families and communities. It is also necessary to have an institutional policy for LGBTQIA+ members to eliminate the stigma and have a better opportunities for them. Promoting these efforts can help achieve greater understanding, reduce prejudice, and foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE BEKIS OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY IN MARINDUQUE

Winnie Jane Obani, Monique Pedernal, Chelxy Paglinawan, Jenny Rose Perin
Ashly Nicole Prieto, Clarion Nabing

INTRODUCTION

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Furthermore, the findings reveal that there is no significant relationship between the respondents’ demographic characteristics and their attitudes and beliefs toward the LGBT community and related policies. This suggests that acceptance is influenced more by personal perspectives and experiences rather than factors such as age, sex, education, or religion alone.

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Level of Gender Sensitivity of BSSW Students in Selected SUCs in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA)

Morales Ronalyn, Naubos Jhay,
Moreno Andrea Mae, Nerias Norie Ann
Mae, Retardo Mark Dave, Ricafrente
Kate

Issue No. 2: 2025

BUSLO NG
Marinduque

LEVEL OF GENDER SENSITIVITY OF BSSW STUDENTS IN SELECTED SUCS IN REGION IV-B (MIMAROPA)

Morales Ronalyn, Nabos Jhay, Moreno Andrea Mae,
Nerias Norie Ann Mae, Retardo Mark Dave, Ricafrente Kate

ABSTRACT

Gender sensitivity is crucial in promoting equality and inclusivity, especially in professions like social work. This study assessed the level of gender sensitivity among Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students in four selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA): Marinduque State College (MSC), Western Philippines University (WPU), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), and Palawan State University (PSU). Using a descriptive research design, data were collected via an online survey questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings show that students generally demonstrate high gender sensitivity across three indicators: use of language, gender role attitudes, and participation. However, significant differences were observed among institutions, with PSU and OMSC scoring higher than MSC and WPU. The study underscores the importance of standardized gender-sensitive programs across higher education institutions to prepare socially responsible graduates.

Keywords: gender sensitivity, SUC's, gender roles attitudes, use of language, participation social work.

INTRODUCTION

The study highlights the importance of gender sensitivity as a critical element in promoting equality and inclusivity, particularly in the field of social work. It is anchored on the global and national efforts to advance gender equality, such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 01, s. 2015, which mandates the integration of Gender and Development (GAD) principles in higher education curriculum.

The study is primarily driven by the problem of inconsistent levels of gender sensitivity among institutions, as reflected in the significant differences in students' language use, gender role attitudes, and participation. Notably, Marinduque State College (MSC) recorded comparatively lower results across all indicators, suggesting gaps in the implementation and integration of gender-sensitive education and GAD-related initiatives. These variations indicate that while gender sensitivity is generally evident among social work students, its development is uneven and influenced by institutional practices and curriculum delivery.

In response to this issue, the purpose of the study is to examine and compare the level of gender sensitivity among BSSW students across selected SUCs and to identify areas that require improvement in gender-responsive education. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for the development and implementation of a localized and standardized GAD curriculum framework that can be consistently applied across State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B. This proposed standardization aims to address the lower performance observed in Marinduque State College (MSC) and ensure that all institutions produce socially responsible, gender-sensitive, and inclusive future social workers.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents

The respondents of this study were Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students from four State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA), specifically Marinduque State College (MSC), Western Philippines University (WPU), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), and Palawan State University (PSU). The study utilized a total sample of BSSW students selected through stratified sampling to ensure equal representation from each institution.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument used in the study was an online survey questionnaire, which was designed to measure the level of gender sensitivity among BS Social Work students. The questionnaire was divided into indicators such as use of gender-fair language, gender role attitudes, and participation. Each item was rated using a Likert scale to determine the respondents' level of agreement. In addition, supporting data were gathered from related literature, institutional reports, and Gender and Development (GAD) materials to strengthen the interpretation of results.

Data Gathering Process

The study employed a descriptive-comparative research design. The researchers first sought permission from the respective institutions and coordinators of the BSSW programs in the selected SUCs. After approval, the online survey questionnaire was distributed to the identified respondents. Data collection was conducted within a specified period, ensuring that responses were gathered fairly and consistently across all participating institutions. After retrieval, the data were tallied, encoded, and analyzed using weighted mean to determine the level of gender sensitivity and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to identify significant differences among the four SUCs. Finally, the results were interpreted based on statistical findings and were used to draw conclusions regarding the level and variation of gender sensitivity among BSSW students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study showed that Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students from the selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) generally demonstrate a high level of gender sensitivity in terms of gender-fair language, gender role attitudes, and participation. This indicates that students are aware of gender equality and are able to apply inclusive behaviors in both academic and social settings.

However, differences were observed among institutions. Palawan State University (PSU) and Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) obtained higher mean scores compared to Marinduque State College (MSC) and Western Philippines University (WPU). The ANOVA results confirmed that these differences are statistically significant, suggesting that the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs varies across institutions. In particular, the consistently lower scores of Marinduque State College (MSC) indicate a need for stronger integration of gender-sensitive practices in its curriculum and activities.

The overall weighted mean for use of language was 4.09, interpreted as "Agree," indicating that students generally practice gender-fair language. Among the institutions, Occidental Mindoro State College obtained the highest mean score of 4.21, reflecting stronger application of inclusive language.

On the other hand, Marinduque State College recorded the lowest mean of 3.93, although still within the "Agree" level. This suggests that while students are aware of gender-fair language, there are variations in how consistently it is practiced. The results imply a need for continuous reinforcement of inclusive communication across institutions.

The overall weighted mean for gender role attitudes was 4.14, interpreted as “Agree,” indicating generally positive and egalitarian views among students. Palawan State University recorded the highest mean score of 4.32, suggesting stronger support for gender equality. In contrast, Marinduque State College had the lowest mean score of 3.84, though still within the “Agree” range. This shows that while students tend to reject traditional gender stereotypes, some variations still exist. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening educational efforts to further promote progressive gender perspectives.

Participation obtained the highest overall weighted mean of 4.29, interpreted as “Strongly Agree.” This indicates that students are actively involved in activities that promote gender sensitivity and inclusivity. Palawan State University had the highest score of 4.41, reflecting a high level of student engagement. Meanwhile, Marinduque State College had the lowest mean of 4.02, though still within the “Strongly Agree” level. The results suggest that students recognize the importance of participation in promoting gender equality. However, differences among institutions indicate varying levels of opportunities or encouragement for involvement.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results showed significant differences among the SUCs across all indicators, with F-values greater than 2.88 at the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the variations in gender sensitivity among institutions are statistically significant and not due to chance. The findings suggest that institutional factors such as curriculum, programs, and implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives influence students’ gender sensitivity. These differences highlight the need for a more standardized approach in promoting gender-sensitive education. Strengthening policies and practices across institutions may help reduce these disparities. These findings are supported by the study of Lyka T. Manglal-lan (2024) on Egalitarian Gender Role Attitudes (EGRA), which is based on YAFS-related and national survey data.

The study found that while gender-equal attitudes in the public sphere such as work and education have improved over time, traditional views in the private sphere, particularly within the home, still persist. This explains why, despite high overall gender sensitivity among students, variations still exist across institutions like Marinduque State College (MSC), where traditional beliefs may still influence attitudes.

To further support the quantitative findings, an interview was conducted with Mrs. Rosavilla L. Hizole, President of the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina (KALIPI)–Maybo. She emphasized that all individuals, regardless of gender including males, females, and LGBTQ+ members should be treated with respect to promote peace and social cohesion. This aligns with the study’s findings that students generally exhibit positive gender role attitudes. She also highlighted the important role of women as strong, resilient, and capable individuals who contribute not only in the household but also in community development and leadership. This supports the study’s high participation scores, indicating that students recognize the active role of women in society. In addition, she noted that men also have their own organization called “KATROPA,” which provides them with a space for support, involvement, and development. This reflects the idea that gender sensitivity is not only focused on women but also promotes inclusivity and participation for all genders. The presence of both KALIPI and KATROPA in the community highlights the importance of balanced and equal opportunities for men and women. Furthermore, she stressed that gender sensitivity should be mutual, where both men and women understand and respect each other. However, she acknowledged that women still experience unfair treatment in some cases, which reflects the findings of Manglal-lan (2024) that traditional gender norms still persist, especially in private seating. She also emphasized that individuals should be respected regardless of their clothing and self-expression, as this is part of human rights and dignity. This supports the study’s findings on gender-fair language and inclusive attitudes among students.

Overall, both the survey results and supporting literature indicate that gender sensitivity among BS Social Work students is generally high but not evenly distributed across institutions. The persistence of traditional gender norms, as highlighted in the literature, and the lower performance of Marinduque State College (MSC) suggest the need for stronger and more consistent implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) programs to promote equality and inclusivity in all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

DISCUSSION

Gender sensitivity, defined as the awareness and understanding of gender differences and the promotion of fairness and inclusivity, is essential for social work professionals who are expected to uphold social justice and equal opportunities. The findings of this study, which revealed a generally high level of gender sensitivity among BSSW students in selected State

Universities and Colleges (SUCs), indicate that higher education institutions are making progress in developing gender-aware future practitioners. However, the observed differences among institutions particularly the lower performance of Marinduque State College (MSC)—suggest that efforts in promoting gender sensitivity are not yet uniform and still require strengthening.

These findings can be viewed in relation to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Sustainable Development Goal 3, Sustainable Development Goal 4, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Sustainable Development Goal 10, Sustainable Development Goal 16, and Sustainable Development Goal 17.

The high level of gender sensitivity among students contributes to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by promoting positive mental and social environments where individuals feel respected and included. When students practice gender-fair attitudes and behaviors, it reduces discrimination and supports overall well-being.

In terms of SDG 4 (Quality Education), the results reflect the role of educational institutions in providing inclusive and equitable learning environments. However, the variation in scores among SUCs highlights the need for more consistent and strengthened Gender and Development (GAD) integration, especially in MSC, to ensure that all students receive the same quality of gender-sensitive education.

The study directly supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which is the central focus of the research. The positive attitudes of students toward gender roles, participation, and inclusivity indicate progress in empowering all genders. At the same time, the differences across institutions and the persistence of some traditional beliefs show that achieving full gender equality remains a continuing process.

Furthermore, the findings relate to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as the study reveals disparities in gender sensitivity levels among institutions. Addressing these gaps is important in

reducing inequalities within academic settings and ensuring equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender.

The study also aligns with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), as gender-sensitive education helps build inclusive and respectful environments. Promoting fairness and respect among students contributes to the development of institutions that uphold justice and equality.

Lastly, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is reflected through the collaboration among different SUCs and community organizations. In connection with this, groups such as KALIPI in Maybo, Boac play an important role in promoting gender awareness at the community level. Their programs, along with academic efforts, strengthen partnerships that support gender equality and social development.

Overall, the study shows that while BSSW students generally demonstrate gender sensitivity, there is still a need for stronger institutional efforts, consistent program implementation, and active partnerships to fully achieve the goals of gender equality and inclusive development.

CONCLUSION

The Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) program shows that students from Region IV-B display high gender sensitivity. The study found that all institutions tested their students but Marinduque State College (MSC) showed lower results than all other institutions. The existing differences show that although organizations established policies Gender and Development (GAD) programs and curriculum delivery need better implementation management.

The development and implementation of a standardized localized GAD framework will create uniform standards that all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) must follow. The establishment of gender-sensitive educational programs will help social work students develop the necessary skills to achieve equality and inclusivity and social justice.

